

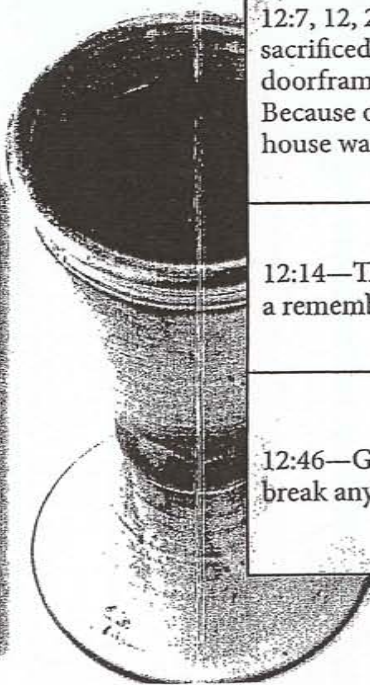
“For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us keep the Festival.”

—1 Corinthians 5:7-8

OLD TESTAMENT ORIGIN OF THE PASSOVER

THE PASSOVER is the Old Testament feast that celebrates and remembers God’s liberation of Israel from Egypt. After Joseph saved Egypt from starvation (Genesis 41), the Israelites lived in Egypt as guests. Eventually, the Egyptians forgot about Joseph and enslaved the Israelites (Exodus 1:6-14). The book of Exodus explains how God freed his people from Egypt. Because of the hardness of Pharaoh’s heart, God punished Egypt with ten plagues (Exodus 7-11). During the last plague, God killed all the first-borns—humans and animals—in the land of Egypt. However, God gave his people a way to escape the destruction: a lamb could take the place of the first-born in the family. God gave Moses the instructions for the time when God’s punishment passed over the Israelite homes (Exodus 12). This is the Passover. The Passover feast was to be repeated throughout the generations as a memorial forever.

THE YEAR AD 70 marks a defining moment in the history of Judaism. The Roman armies destroyed the temple. The temple played a crucial role in the Jewish faith. Until then, the main component of the Passover was the sacrifice of the lamb in the temple. When the temple disappeared, the Haggadah, the “telling” of God’s acts of deliverance, became the central part of the Passover. Today a roasted lamb shank bone symbolizes the lamb that would have been sacrificed in the temple.



THE PASSOVER IN THE BIBLE

In Exodus 12, God gives Moses the instructions and requirements for the Passover

EXODUS 12	CHRIST
12:1-2—The feast marked a new year, a new beginning for the Israelites.	In Christ, every believer is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). Old things and the old life are past.
12:5—A male lamb in its first year was taken into the home on the tenth of Nisan (the first month of the Jewish calendar). While in the home, it was closely inspected to see if there were any blemishes or disfigurements. If it was without defect, it was then sacrificed on the fourteenth of Nisan.	Christ was closely inspected by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilate (Matthew 27:11-26; Luke 23:1-6; 13-25; John 18:28-19:16) • Herod (Luke 23:8-12) • Annas (John 18:12-13; 19-24) • Caiaphas (Matthew 26:57). They could find no fault in him. Christ is the “lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Peter 1:19).
12:6—The “whole community” of God’s people was required to participate in the sacrifice.	Accepting Christ’s sacrifice is required for all who want to be part of God’s community (Romans 3:21-26).
12:7, 12, 22—The blood of the sacrificed lamb was applied to the doorframe—the lintel and side posts. Because of the covering of blood, the house was spared from God’s plague.	Christ shed his blood to rescue his people. We need to be covered or justified by the blood of the Lamb to be rescued from condemnation (Romans 3:25; 5:9). Christ is the Lamb that takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29).
12:14—The Passover was to be kept as a remembrance forever.	During the Last Supper, Jesus refers to the bread as “my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19).
12:46—God commanded Israel not to break any bones of the sacrificed lamb.	To speed up Jesus’ death, the Roman soldiers were going to break his legs. However, Jesus was already dead, so his bones remained unbroken (John 19:32-33).